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SUBJECT: MANADO'S TRADITIONAL FISHERMEN AND FISH STOCKS FACE NUMEROUS THREATS

REF: SURABAYA 111 (FISHERY LAW THREATENS MALUKU TRADITIONS)

¶1. Representatives from the local NGO KELOLA and the North Sulawesi Traditional Fisherman Association (ANTRA) are trying to raise awareness about threats to the livelihood of traditional fishermen in North Sulawesi. Local fishermen established ANTRA, with a current membership of 1500, earlier this year to facilitate a coordinated response to threats from overfishing, development, pollution, and industry.

¶2. The most disturbing threat to traditional fishermen and their livelihood is the decrease in the overall totals of fish caught. The size of the fish caught has also dramatically decreased in the last five years. Traditional fishermen blame pollution, overfishing by commercial fishermen, and illegal fishing for the decrease in the number of total fish. The figure for 2008 was around 139,000 tons of fish caught, down nearly 50% from the 2007 total of 272,000 tons of fish caught. Garbage from the city of Manado and pollution are also factors in the decrease in fish size of fish, as the fish are not as healthy as before.

¶3. In the city of Manado, fisherman are concerned about access to coastal areas after the local government built new shopping and office centers along the coast. They claim the developer of these commercial centers did not fulfill a promise to build docking areas along the development's edge for local fisherman. Similarly, in North Minahasa, traditional fisherman lost their access to fishing grounds due to the developing sand mining industry. Local fishermen lose all dock access whenever sand mining activities occur.

¶4. While Bunaken National Park brings significant tourist dollars and prestige to North Sulawesi, local fishermen complain that Bunaken's "fish catching zones," which are regulated by the National Park Administrator, limits their livelihood. Traditional fishermen, who usually have limited schooling, lack education about the rules and are often charged with crimes for violating the Park's regulations. ANTRA members want more education and explanations about the regulations and rules which apply to traditional fisherman.

¶5. More distant islands feel increasing pressure from large commercial fishing vessels operating in Indonesian waters. Antara complain that illegal fishing by Philippine, South Korean, and Thai commercial fishing vessels are severely harming the traditional fishing industry. In addition to the mounting external pressures facing the traditional fisherman, the remoteness of the islands, with limited access to markets, fuel, and supplies, continues to undermine the commercial viability of traditional fishing methods. The remote location also affects the ability of Indonesian Navy and police to properly patrol the waters in this area.

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